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VOL. XI. NO. 5.

GREENVILLE, KY., THURSDAY MARCH 11, 1909.

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Lengthening Life.

It has been but a few weeks since a prominent Yale professor suggested to insurance men that human life might be lengthened materially if proper steps were taken.

The hint was one that had commercial value to the men addressed, as will readily appear if a little thought is given to it.

The officials of the New York health department have just made some comparisons of the conditions in that city in 1908 and those that existed in 1898.

One of the things discovered was that fewer children under 5 years of age died in the city in 1908 than in 1898, although the total population has increased by over 1,000,000 in the decade.

The exact figures are, for 1898, 25,499; for 1908, 24,140. A table showing deaths at 25, 35, 55, 65, 75 and 85 indicates that there has been a notable shrinking in the number of deaths at each point, except the last two.

For illustration: At 25 in 1898 there were 6,673 deaths as against 3,206 in 1908. The other points indicate like gains. At 85, however 904 died in the last year and 762 in 1898.

At 75 there were 2,727 deaths in 1898 and 3,175 in 1908. A comparison of death rates show that in 1898 it was 19.28 and in 1908 it was 16.52.

The health officials believe that the statistics prove that life is being lengthened as a result of their campaign. This has secured greater vigilance on the part of the authorities and more knowledge among the people of the laws of sanitation.

Particularly in the case of tuberculosis there has been marked advance. There is every reason for great satisfaction with the progress that is being made in fighting this foe of the race.

All sorts of organizations have taken a hand in the battle. The importance of the observance of simple rules of health has become generally recognized.

The gift of more than \$1,000,000 by Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt Sr. for the construction of sanitary tenements for people afflicted with tuberculosis is reported.

These will be conducted in connection with a hospital which has been meeting with steady success in handling cases of this disease.

It is not exactly a charity. It is believed that the returns from the investment of funds will show a satisfactory income, even with rentals low and favors shown to those who need a certain kind of care.

There are people who are disposed at times to make light of the activities of those who are pushing the fight against the tuberculosis peril.

But the statistics that are being published from time to time appear to bear out the claim of these campaigners for health, that steady gains are being made.

That a woman of wealth should be willing to set aside a million dollars to help a good cause along is encouraging. That the comparative figures for years a decade apart prove that life is being prolonged is even more gratifying.

Some Great Catastrophes.

"It is the general opinion that earthquakes constitute the most terrible of the world's catastrophes, both as regards loss of life and destruction of property," says an English writer. "This however, is not so. The convulsion in southern Italy killed not less than 200,000 people and in this respect it is easily the most dreadful occurrence of its kind. The historic Lisbon earthquake, which ranks next below it in regard to the number of fatalities, caused about 50,000 deaths in that one city alone and about an equal number elsewhere. The South American one of 1867 was responsible for 30,000. That which destroyed Aleppo in 1822 slew 20,000. These are the four worst earthquakes concerning which anything like reliable statistics are obtainable, and the total combined loss of life, it will be observed, did not, at any rate, exceed 350,000.

"But when the Yellow river burst its banks in September, 1887, more than 7,000,000 people were drowned

in the resultant great flood, which covered to an average depth of six feet of populous Chinese province the size of Scotland. Thus, in this one catastrophe, more lives were lost than in all the earthquakes recorded in the world's history. Then, again, there is pestilence. The black death killed in China, where it broke out, 13,000,000 people, in the rest of Asia 24,000,000 and 30,000,000 in Europe, or 67,000,000 in all. In India alone, and that within the past twelve years, bubonic plague has slain over 6,000,000 people and the epidemic still rages.

"Famines run plagues a close second. The one that raged in Bombay and Madras in 1877 slew 5,000,000 people; and that which prevailed in northern China in the same year and which was due to the same climatic causes cost 9,500,000 lives."

Foods for the Gouty.

Doctor Haig of London, who has attained eminence in the treatment of certain diseases, came to his theory of the uric-acid causation of many cases of so-called neuralgia, rheumatic pains, gouty twinges and headache as a result of observation on himself. During his student and early professional days he suffered horribly from periodical head-

aches, losing an average of one or two days out of every week in consequence thereof. He experimented with all sorts of drugs and modes of living, and finally discovered that the less meat he ate the less headache he had, and he found further that the occurrence of headache was marked by a simultaneous excretion of a large amount of uric acid.

From these two facts he concluded that the headache was due to the presence of uric acid in the blood, and that the presence of uric acid in the blood was due to meat-eating. From this beginning was developed a complete system of dietetics, having for its object the exclusion of all uric-acid-containing foods, since, if uric acid is really the cause of these troubles, no permanent relief can be expected so long as fresh quantities of the offending poison are thrown into the system every day.

Man is naturally a fruit-and-vegetable-eating animal, he believes, and must return to his original diet as the only means to his sanitary salvation. In other words, Doctor Haig is a vegetarian, but a peculiar kind of one, for he does not allow all vegetable foods by any means.

Beans, peas and other pulses are forbidden, since their protein is readily convertible into uric acid, and especially does he eschew tea and coffee, their alkaloidal ingredient, caffeine, being practically the same chemically as uric acid.

The diet of one who would avoid becoming a subject of the uric-acid diathesis, or who would emancipate himself from the pains of the already existing condition, must therefore consist almost entirely of breadstuffs and cereals, puddings, fresh and dried fruits, nuts and the milk products. Water is the only beverage allowed. It is a meager diet, and must be more or less monotonous; and moreover, it is not always efficacious in curing periodical headaches and other supposed manifestations of the uric-acid diathesis. An occasional course of it, and a habitual more or less close approach to it are, no doubt, of great benefit to the general health, but one must not forget that many of the ills credited to uric acid may be a direct result of eye-strain, to be relieved more by glasses than by diet.

The Youth's Companion for 1909.

The amount of good reading given to subscribers to The Youth's Companion during the year indicated by the following summary of contents for 1909:

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